



accidents don't have to happen

xylem

What is cold water shock?

Cold water shock is a dangerous condition that is caused by entering cold water too quickly. It can happen if you jump in on purpose or if you fall in by accident. It can affect anyone, including strong swimmers.

Cold water shock can cause drowning

Cold water shock affects your ability to breathe and swim normally, which can lead to drowning. It can also cause a heart attack, even if you're fit and healthy.



Cold water shock can happen even in hot weather

Even when the weather is hot, open water like lakes, rivers and the sea can remain very cold.

Water is considered dangerous for cold water shock when it is 15°C or below, meaning it is a risk all year round in many countries.

Reduce the risk of cold water shock. Follow these safety tips:



Always enter the water slowly to give your body time to adjust to the cold.



If you're planning on swimming or spending time near the water, go to a lifeguarded beach or swimming spot.



If you think you are experiencing cold water shock, float on your back until you can control your breathing again. Once you feel calm, shout for help or swim to safety.



If you see someone else in trouble, phone the emergency services, tell the person in the water to float, and throw rescue equipment (if available) to help until the emergency services arrive.

For more information, visit the RoSPA website:
rospa.com/water-safety/cold-water-shock